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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-first year

Identical letters dated 14 November 2016 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

I write to alert you to the critical situation that continues to prevail in the Occupied State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem, owing to Israel's relentless provocations and illegal actions against the Palestinian people. On a daily basis, the occupying Power persists with its grave violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, which are exacerbating the humanitarian situation on the ground, intensifying the hardships faced by the Palestinian people and diminishing any real hope or possibility of achieving peace on the basis of the two-State solution.

Over the years, we have conveyed hundreds of letters to you, particularly during intensely difficult and dark moments faced by the Palestinian civilian population under Israel's nearly half-century occupation. We have repeatedly appealed to the international community, especially the Security Council, to uphold the Charter and the obligation to respect and ensure respect of international law, including by determining measures to compel Israel to end its war crimes and human rights violations against the Palestinian people. The consensus on this is clear: such respect is imperative, not only to stem the deterioration of the situation and alleviate human suffering in the immediate term, but to salvage the long-term prospects for peace and expedite realization of the Palestinian people's inalienable rights, including the rights to self-determination and freedom, which have been forcefully withheld from them for far too long.

Regrettably, our calls have fallen on deaf ears and the international community, in specific the Security Council, continues to fail to uphold its obligations despite the international community's unanimity on both the illegality of Israel's policies and practices against the Palestinian people, including its measures of settlement colonization throughout the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and

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its nearly 10-year blockade of the Gaza Strip in an act of gross and massive collective punishment against our people. One of the main tragedies of the inaction by the international community is that it has unquestionably emboldened Israel to persist with its destructive policies and practices against the defenceless Palestinian population, including, inter alia, the use of excessive force against Palestinian civilians, including children and women, causing death and injury. And, as has been the case throughout the decades, Palestinian children are inordinately bearing the brunt of this increasingly oppressive, violent and illegal Israeli occupation.

Alongside the constant oppression of the Palestinian people, the occupying Power has been unrelenting in its illegal colonization practices, with settlement and wall construction and all related measures, including confiscation of land, demolition of homes and forced displacement of civilians, continuing unabated in grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention and constituting a war crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. The destructive impact of such Israeli violations is immense and has caused further decline of socioeconomic conditions, inflamed tensions and anger among the Palestinian civilian population and deepened their hopelessness.

While it is impossible to record each and every crime committed by Israeli occupying forces and terrorist settlers against the Palestinian people, the record below accounts for some of the many Israeli crimes since our previous letter on 7 October 2016, all clearly reflecting policies aimed at dehumanizing and denying the rights of the Palestinian civilian population, traumatizing generation after generation under this illegal occupation.

9 October 2016

Israeli occupying forces demolished eight homes in the Bedouin community of Khan Al-Ahmar in the central West Bank, forcibly displacing and leaving homeless 28 Palestinians, 18 of them children.

20 October 2016

Israeli occupying forces shot and killed Khalid Bahr Ahmad Bahr, age 15. The boy was shot in the back, with the bullet exiting through his chest. In a clear continuation of Israel's "shoot-to-kill" policy, Israeli soldiers shot Khalid in the back because he was allegedly throwing stones. The fact that he was shot three times in the back clearly disproves the bogus claim that the Israeli forces felt under threat.

26 October 2016

Israel, the occupying Power, demolished a four-apartment building in the Palestinian neighbourhood of Silwan of Occupied East Jerusalem under the pretext of "construction without permission". Israeli forces, accompanied by armed bulldozers, broke into the area in the early morning hours and demolished the building owned by four brothers from the Ja'afreh family, displacing 30 people, including women and children. Issa Ja'afreh, owner of one of the apartments, said he and his brothers had been fighting the demolition order for nine years, hoping to get a building permit from the occupying Power but to no avail. Besides the cruel

and illegal demolition of their homes, they have been ordered to pay demolition costs estimated at nearly 40,000 United States dollars.

27 October 2016

The so-called Israeli municipality announced its intention to construct 180 illegal settlement units in the illegal settlement "Gilo" in Occupied East Jerusalem.

29 October 2016

Ahmad Hamed was shot and severely injured by an Israeli occupying soldier who was manning a military checkpoint near the town of Silwad, east of Ramallah. Hamed was shot by three bullets in the right leg, stomach and right shoulder causing rupture of the lung and fractured ribs. The bullet lodged in the liver and he remains in critical condition.

30 October 2016

Khalid Ahmad Elayyan Ikhlayyil, 23, was killed by Israeli occupying forces near the village of Beit Ummar near Al-Khalil in the vicinity of the illegal settlement bloc of "Gush Etzion".

1 November 2016

The occupying Power raised an Israeli flag at the eastern entrance of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, also known as the Church of the Resurrection, in Occupied East Jerusalem. The Higher Presidential Committee of Church Affairs in Palestine condemned this illegal action, stressing that it constitutes a clear violation of the sanctity of the holy site and the historic status quo that has been in place for decades, including that the occupying Power shall not raise any flags on Muslim or Christian religious properties.

2 November 2016

Israeli occupying forces detained at least 28 Palestinians, including a woman and five children aged 15, 16 and 17 years, during overnight raids in the occupied West Bank, including Occupied East Jerusalem.

Israeli occupying forces demolished a two-story residence in Beit Hanina, a neighbourhood of Occupied East Jerusalem, displacing more Palestinian families.

3 November 2016

Maen Nasser al-Din Abu Qaraa, age 23, from the village of al-Mazraa al-Qibliyaa, was killed by Israeli occupying forces after allegedly attempting to stab an Israeli soldier who was guarding a bus stop near the illegal settlement of "Ofra" near Ramallah. Occupying forces reportedly prevented Palestinian medics from approaching the scene, leaving him to bleed to death. He is the 238th Palestinian to be killed by Israeli occupying forces or settlers since the recent cycle of violence began in October 2015.

Israeli occupying forces detained at least 22 Palestinians, including nine members of the Abu Shousheh family, during overnight raids across the West Bank.

Israeli soldiers also ransacked a shop located beneath Abu Shouseh's house and confiscated a number of vehicles. Also, in Occupied East Jerusalem, so-called Israeli forces raided the Jabal Al-Mukabbir neighbourhood, forcibly searching two homes and detaining four Palestinians from the Ewesat family, including three brothers.

Occupying forces demolished two storage warehouses and a butchery in Beita, south of Nablus.

4 November 2016

Israeli occupying forces reportedly banned the Muslim call to dawn prayer from the loudspeakers of three mosques in the town of Abu Dis. Israeli soldiers raided the town just before the dawn prayer on Friday, 4 November, and raided the Al-Rahman, Al-Taybeh and Al-Jamia mosques in the town and issued a ban on the call for dawn prayer through the loudspeakers, in a clear violation of the fundamental right of freedom to worship. The events in Abu Dis came a day after a number of illegal Israeli settlers from the illegal settlement of "Pisgat Zeev" protested in front of the house of so-called Mayor of Jerusalem, Nir Barakat, over the "noise pollution" caused by the Muslim call to prayer.

6 November 2016

Israeli naval forces opened fire at Palestinian fishermen off the coast of Beit Lahiya in the northern Gaza Strip. According to the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, Israeli forces detained 71 fishermen and confiscated 22 fishing boats throughout 2015. The Centre reported that Israeli naval forces had also opened fire on Palestinian fishermen at least 139 times over the course of the year in the blockaded Gaza Strip, wounding 24 persons and damaging 16 fishing boats.

7 November 2016

An Israeli court sentenced a 14-year-old Palestinian boy, Ahmad Manasra, to 12 years in prison. Manasra was convicted of attempted murder for carrying out an alleged stabbing attack on 12 October 2015 that injured two Israeli settlers near the illegal settlement of "Pisgat Zeev" in the Beit Hanina neighbourhood of Occupied East Jerusalem. In addition to the sentencing of a child to a 12-year prison sentence, the so-called court also imposed a fine on his family of over 45,000 United States dollars.

It should be mentioned that during the alleged attack, Ahmad's cousin Hassan Khalid Manasra, age 15, was shot dead at the scene by occupying forces, while Ahmad was hit by a car and seriously wounded. A video was taken of young Ahmad lying injured and bleeding on the ground, with an Israeli onlooker clearly heard saying: "Die, son of a wh***! Die!" while another tells the Israeli police officer to shoot him. The cruel treatment of Ahmad continued after his detention as Israeli forces cursed and verbally abused the boy, who at the time was 13 years old.

Ahmad's trial was also postponed several times, leaving many to conclude that the move to delay the case until he turned 14 in January 2016 was deliberately made to facilitate sentencing when he would be old enough under Israeli law for a prison sentence. It is important to note, that according to a report issued in September 2016

by the Palestinian Committee of Prisoners' Affairs, at least 1,000 Palestinian children between the ages of 11 and 18 have been detained by Israel since January 2016, many of whom have been abused and tortured while in detention. According to the Palestinian prisoners' rights group Addameer, a total of 340 Palestinian children are currently being incarcerated by Israel.

9 November 2016

Muhammad Amr, age 32, from the city of Tulkarem was critically wounded by live ammunition shot by Israeli occupying forces at the entrance of the village of Huwwara near Nablus. The occupying Power alleged that Muhammad tried to stab an Israeli soldier while witnesses at the scene claimed that Muhammad was only attempting to cross the street before being shot.

As evidenced by the mounting list of human rights violations and international humanitarian law violations, Israel, the occupying Power, remains in complete disrespect and contempt of the law, causing endless destruction, suffering and anguish for the Palestinian people. We repeat today our appeal to the international community to protect our people, as a matter of urgency and in accordance with international law. Moreover, we call for urgent action to compel Israel to completely halt its illegal colonization of the Occupied State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem. This is imperative to stem the deterioration and reverse the dangerous reality on the ground, as repeatedly stressed by the international community, including the Quartet. The international community must unequivocally demand an end to all of these Israeli violations and the Security Council in specific cannot be absolved of its responsibilities. The time is long overdue to stop Israel from acting as a State above the law and to finally end this illegal occupation in all its manifestations.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 597 previous letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 7 October 2016 (A/ES-10/734-S/2016/848), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Feda **Abdelhady-Nasser**
Charge d'affaires a.i.